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ART. I.—*Elémens de la Grammaire Chinoise ; ou Principes Généraux du Kou-wen, ou style antique, et du Kouan hoa, c'est à dire, de la langue commune, généralement usitée dans l'Empire Chinois : par M. Abel Remusat, de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, Professeur de Langue et Littérature Chinoises et Tartares au Collège Royale de France. Paris. Imprimerie, Royale. 1822.*

THE Chinese language has hitherto been considered as extremely difficult. Mr Remusat, whose name alone is an authority of the highest kind, independently of the reasons which he gives for his opinion, considers this idea as an error. His remarks are so well fitted to encourage a more general attention to this curious language, that we shall extract them by way of introduction to a short notice of the contents of the grammar.

‘As the difficulty of learning the Chinese language has been greatly exaggerated,’ says the author in his preface, ‘it is of some importance to show that the acquisition of it is just as easy as that of any other. This will appear to a demonstration, from a perusal of the little work now submitted to the public ; and, with a view of encouraging the student, I have no hesitation in giving him beforehand my decided opinion that he will find this to be the fact. Every thing essential is contained in this short tract ; and the student who

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has learned the four hundred paragraphs of which it is composed may begin at once his course of reading without any apprehension of being arrested by grammatical difficulties. Had the introduction to this language been equally easy a century ago, it would probably have been much more extensively cultivated; and the literary treasures locked up in it would before now have been turned to account. It is ascertained at present that the Chinese written language, the study of which was said to occupy a whole life, may be learned as quickly as any other and without any greater effort of attention or memory. The only real difficulty lies in the difference between the grammatical forms of this language and of those to which we are accustomed; but this is so far from being insurmountable that a week's labor will remove it entirely. The number of characters appears formidable; but it is so in appearance only, as the greater part of them are not used; and a person who is acquainted with two thousand will never be at a loss. They have certainly a strange look; but this is rather an advantage than otherwise, as it serves to fix them in the memory; and it may also be added, in opposition to the common opinion, that these characters are the more easily impressed upon the mind from their representing objects instead of sounds. The dictionaries are methodical and regular, books are generally divided and arranged in the most convenient form with notes and illustrations, tables of contents and indexes, running titles and numbered pages, and in short every possible facility for consultation and study. The grammar is of the simplest kind. Particles are used to modify the sense of the principal words instead of changes in the terminations, and the order in which the words are arranged in a sentence is invariable; so that, although the language is elliptical and figurative, it seldom happens that a phrase can be understood in two ways. I make these remarks because they express an opinion entirely different from the one generally received. It has happened, by a sort of fatality, that the most erroneous notions have been circulated upon this subject by a succession of writers; but any judicious student will be satisfied, in a very short time, that the Chinese, like the rest of the world, attach a meaning to what they write and speak; and that, with the necessary study and attention, they may of course be understood.'

One great difficulty has hitherto been the want of elementary books. The Catholic missionaries collected a mass of materials proper to be employed in the composition of such works ; but of these a small proportion has yet been published, and that in a very unsatisfactory form. Mr Remusat considers the unpublished treatise of Father Prémare, entitled *Notitia linguæ Sinicæ*, as by far the best in existence. It belongs to the Royal library at Paris, and is so voluminous that it will probably not be printed very soon. The author also speaks with approbation of Morrison's grammar of the Chinese language, printed at Serampore in 1815 ; and of the dictionary of the same author, which, however, is incomplete. The best complete dictionary is the Chinese and Latin one of Father Basil de Glemona, published by Mr de Guignes jun. ; to which should be added the supplement of Klapproth.

Mr Remusat seems to entertain high notions of the value of Chinese literature. 'The Royal library,' he observes, 'contains about five thousand volumes of Chinese books, most of which have never been opened. They are replete with the most valuable information ; and comprehend all the best works in the language in the several departments of mythology and antiquities, history, geography and statistics ; legislation and politics ; natural history ; plays, poetry, and novels. To explore this rich mine which remains almost untouched, among so many others that are nearly exhausted, would reward the labor of twenty studious persons for half a century ; and only two or three years of preparation are necessary to obtain a free access to its treasures. The value of them cannot be doubted for a moment by any intelligent man ; and the neglect, in which they have so long been suffered to remain, is far from being honorable to the philosophical spirit of the nation.' A printed catalogue of these books drawn up by Fourmont is already in existence. Mr Remusat informs us that he has been for some years engaged in preparing another, more correct and complete. Some of these works are remarkable for the beauty of the impression, as the *Kou-wen-youan-kian*, which the author considers as perhaps the most splendid specimen of typography in the library. Others extend to a very extraordinary number of volumes. An historical collection, of which the library possesses two detached parts, one in eighty volumes, and the other in sixty,

is said to extend in the whole to no less than six thousand. The substantial merit of some of these productions is not less distinguished, as we learn from the following character given by Mr Remusat of a sort of Encyclopedia. 'This excellent work,' he observes, 'is the finest monument of Chinese literature. It is a vast collection of memoirs on all sorts of subjects, in which the whole stock of learning possessed by the Chinese in the several departments of philosophy and history, is digested in the most admirable order. The work is a library of itself; and, if there were no other books in the language, it would be worth learning merely for the sake of reading this.' There is an air of professional enthusiasm about some of these remarks, which will not escape the notice of the judicious reader; but the high respectability and acknowledged learning of Mr Remusat afford a sufficient guarantee of the substantial correctness of his opinions.

The curiosity of the reader may perhaps be gratified by a few of the more general remarks contained in this grammar upon the structure of the Chinese language.

The simple sounds which enter into the composition of it consist, according to the Chinese enumeration, of thirty six consonants and ten vowels, including the nasals; but many of them are almost imperceptible varieties in the utterance of the same sound; and Mr Remusat reduces the number of consonant sounds, which can be expressed by European letters, to twenty six. The vowels are the five which are found in all the European languages, pronounced in the Italian long; the four French nasals, with the addition of an Italian *n* nasal, and the French *e* mute. Hence the elementary sounds may be considered as substantially the same with those which form the basis of the various alphabets of Europe. But the Chinese have no alphabet, that is, they have no characters by which to express these sounds in writing.

The language consists of about four hundred and fifty words, all monosyllables, and composed, for the most part, of an initial consonant, and a final vowel or nasal. Hence the whole language is exactly represented by the series of words that form the first lesson for reading in the common school books, *ba, be, bi, bo, bu; ca, ce, ci, co, cu, &c*; making allowance for the difference between the consonant and vowel sounds employed by the Chinese and English. There is,

however, a series of about a hundred words that begin as well as end with vowels ; and thus form pure diphthongs. Each of these four hundred and fifty words may be pronounced with three or four different intonations ; and has a different signification in consequence. In this way the real number of words may be reckoned at about twelve hundred. Some Chinese grammarians, however, by means of other imperceptible shades and varieties of intonations, extend the number to two and even to four thousand ; but the former computation is the usual and correct one.

The written characters, as is well known, express objects, or, considered in reference to the language, entire words ; and not simple sounds. The copiousness of these is equally remarkable with the paucity of words. The best dictionaries give the explanation of thirty or forty thousand ; and some grammarians reckon the number at sixty or seventy thousand. A great part of them, however, are either obsolete or practically useless ; and Mr Remusat, as quoted above, conceives that a person, who is acquainted with two thousand, would find no difficulty in reading. It is obvious, indeed, that the number of characters and of words, actually in use, must be about the same ; as every idea of frequent occurrence must have an expression both in writing and speaking.

Of these characters there are six classes, a brief account of which may serve to illustrate the manner in which the language has been formed. The first class consisted originally of signs intended to imitate in a rude way the outlines of sensible objects. Thus the sun was expressed by a circle with a point in the middle ; and the moon by a crescent ; as in our almanacs. Of these characters there were, as Mr Remusat informs us, about two hundred ; and they probably formed the original basis of the written language. The modifications which the forms of all the characters have undergone since the invention of typography, for the purpose of giving them a more uniform and elegant appearance, have in a great measure destroyed the resemblance of this class to the objects they represent ; and it is only by researches into the ancient forms of the characters that the analogy can be traced. Thus the circle with a point in the middle, which represented the sun, has taken in modern writing the form of two broad perpendicular lines, crossed by three narrow horizontal ones, or a Roman H united at the top and bottom.

The second class consists of new characters formed by the union of two or more of the first class for the purpose of representing sensible objects of a different kind. Thus a new character describing *light*, is formed by the union of the two characters denoting the *sun* and *moon*; another expressing a *married woman* by the union of the three, that signify separately *woman*, *hand*, and *broom*; a signal proof of the simplicity of the early notions of this singular nation on the subject of domestic economy. *Tears* are denoted by the union of the characters for *eye* and *water*; and a *song* by those for *mouth* and *bird*. The number of characters belonging to this class is very large.

The characters of the third class are called by the Chinese *borrowed*, or *metaphorical*; and are merely those of the first or second class, diverted from their original use to express abstract notions. Thus the character for *heart* is used metaphorically for *understanding*, and that for *hand* for a *mechanic*; *man* repeated three times expresses the verb to *follow*. Some of these tropes appear more arbitrary. Thus, *house* is used for *man*, and *chamber* for *woman*. It is remarkable that the German word for *lady* is *Frauenzimmer*, a *woman's chamber*.

The fourth and fifth classes are both very small. The former consists of arbitrary marks expressing for the most part ideas of position or number. Thus the three first numerals are represented by a corresponding number of straight lines placed horizontally; as they were in the Latin mode of writing, by perpendicular ones. A horizontal line with a point above it, expresses *above*, and with a point below it, *below*. The fifth class is composed of a small number of the characters belonging to the other classes placed in an inverted position to express an idea opposite to the original one. Thus the forked animal man is denoted by a character formed of two lines meeting at an acute angle; while the same character placed horizontally expresses the 'counterfeit of man,' *a dead body*.

The sixth class is the most extensive, and contains of itself as large a number of characters as all the rest together. It approaches more nearly than the others to the alphabetic system of writing; and the characters belonging to it are accordingly called by the Chinese *expressions of sounds*. There is

however this essential difference ; that letters are expressions of simple sounds ; and as the number of them is very small it requires only a small number of letters to express all their possible combinations. On the contrary the Chinese characters of this class express directly combinations of sounds ; and can only be used when the same combination indicates several different things. Thus the word or sound *lee* signifies *place*, and *carp* a kind of fish. Supposing a particular character to express the idea of *place*, and that one was wanted afterwards to express the idea of *carp*, it would appear natural to take the same character, since *carp* is expressed by the same word. On this principle however the same character can never be used to express more different ideas than are expressed by the word to which it corresponds. The principle, as far as it goes, is that of alphabetic writing ; and the characters thus formed are expressions of sounds ; while all the others are of the nature of picture writings, being expressions of the forms of objects. But as these alphabetic characters do not express the intonations which determine in speaking the particular sense in which a word having several meanings is to be understood, it becomes necessary, in order to supply this defect to indicate the particular sense in some other way ; and this is done by uniting to the common character another character analogous to the particular sense. Thus the character corresponding with the word *lee*, when used in the sense of *carp*, is composed of the common character corresponding with this word in all its senses and of the character expressing *fish*. In like manner the word *pa* signifies *white* and a *cypress tree*, and the same character also expresses both these ideas, but, when the latter is intended, the character for *tree* is added to the common character which indicates both. In this way almost all natural objects are expressed by a compound character, of which one part denotes the genus and the other the species ; as they often are in our language by compound words constructed in a similar way ; such as shell-fish, cod-fish, apple-tree, pear-tree, and the like.

The great superiority of the true alphabetic mode of writing over this system in both its branches is quite obvious ; and it seems extraordinary that the Chinese, having once conceived the idea of expressing sounds by arbitrary marks, should not have seen the advantage of applying this method

to simple sounds, instead of confining it wholly to combinations. This is the more remarkable as the neighboring nations, with which the Chinese have always had more or less intercourse, are all provided with alphabets. If this learned people entertained too much contempt for their Tartar conquerors to think of borrowing from them any new methods in science, they might at least have seen the uses of an alphabet among the Hindus, a nation equally civilized with themselves. Even the Japanese who employ the Chinese character on some occasions have also an alphabet. In this respect, as in most others, the Chinese exhibit such appearances as we might expect in a people which has advanced from barbarism to civilization, without being exposed in any considerable degree to the influence of foreigners. This system of writing is evidently nothing more than an improved form of the first and rudest methods, such as are still employed by the Indians of our own continent. The two hundred original characters, imitated from the figures of sensible objects, form the *roots* or *keys* of the language; and are used as such in the dictionaries; where all the new characters, formed from them by composition or the metaphorical diversion of the sense, are referred to them and classed under them. Such at least appears to have been the original principle of the mode of classification adopted in the dictionaries, although the relation between the derivatives and the radicals may not at present precisely correspond with it in any case.

These are the general features of the Chinese language as written and spoken by the three hundred millions of people, that compose this vast empire. It must be observed, however, that many provinces have their peculiar dialects or modifications of the common language. Besides these there are two forms of the language, called, by Mr Remusat, the *antique* and the *modern style*. They appear to be analogous to the ancient and modern form of most of the European languages, with the difference that the ancient form is still regarded as classical, having been consecrated by the usage of the most celebrated authors. In Europe, on the contrary, the languages have not yet varied much from the form in which they were fixed by the earliest writers of correct taste and distinguished talent. The great antiquity of the civilization of China may serve to account for this difference. Perhaps the

French and English languages will have varied considerably from their present form two or three thousand years hence and have taken new ones, which will be consecrated like the present by the best usage in conversation and writing. They will then possess, like the Chinese, two distinct forms, both regarded as pure and classical.

The Chinese language is extremely simple and even rude in its construction. Its nouns, pronouns, and adjectives have neither number, genders, nor cases; and its verbs neither voice, mode, nor tense. Every word is immutable in its form; and the ideas expressed in most other languages by inflexions are either denoted by particles or must be gathered from the position and context. Hence a Chinese grammar differs essentially from a similar work in a European language, and reduces itself in a great measure to a series of observations on the use of particular words. It does not therefore admit of abridgment or extract; and we must refer the curious reader to the work itself for further information. We add, however, a few remarks upon some particular points, which relate more immediately to manners than to grammar.

The personal pronouns are commonly omitted, expressions of humility being in general substituted for that of the first person, and of respect for that of the second. In the ancient style, the phrase *little man* is employed instead of the personal pronoun; as in the following passage of a celebrated work, where we should say, *I have the weakness to love pleasure*, the Chinese author has it, *the little man has a weakness; the little man loves pleasure*. In addressing the Emperor, it is common to use the word *subject* instead of the pronoun of the first person; and in written addresses this word is thrown into the margin, and expressed in a very small character. On the same occasion it is usual to substitute for a pronoun of the second person the phrase of *royal palace* or *bottom of the steps*, where a European would say, *your imperial majesty*; as, *the subject has received the bounty of the royal palace*, for *I have received your majesty's present*.—*The divine genius of the bottom of the steps has united the universe under one government*; instead of, *your majesty's superior genius &c.**

* The phrase *bottom of the steps* appears rather humiliating than respectful. It is expressed by Mr Remusat in French and Latin by *le dessous des pieds, le dessous des degrés, infra gradus, inferior graduum*. If the translation be correct, the phrase

In speaking of the emperor in the third person, it is usual to call him the *son of heaven*. An author speaking in the first person commonly gives himself the title of the *stupid fellow*; as, *the stupid fellow is of opinion*, when we should say, *I venture to remark*, or, *in my humble opinion*. In the modern style, now used in conversation, the ordinary substitute for the pronoun of the first person is, *little younger brother*, as for, *how should I know it?*—*How should your little younger brother know it?* and in like manner for that of the second person, *elder brother*, even in speaking to a younger man. *What my elder brother says is very true*, for, *what you say is very true*. Sometimes the phrase substituted is in a more elevated style, as the *noble horseman*, or the *venerable senior*, in addressing a person of distinction. In the same way the possessive pronouns are expressed by circumlocutions of humility and respect; as the *little wife* for *my wife*, the *poor name* for *my name*; the *cold house* for *my house*. Thus; *the cold house is not more than seventeen or eighteen lees off*; for *my house* &c. *The noble elder brother* for *your elder brother*; *the noble hall* for *your mother*; *the noble thousand pieces of gold*, meaning *your infant daughter*; *the noble beauty*, *your daughter*; *the respectable garment*, *your cloak*; *the honorable chariot* for *your carriage*. The last phrase is also one of the substitutes for the simple pronoun of the second person. Thus, instead of, *do you go to town to day?* a Chinese might ask, *does the honorable chariot proceed to town to day?*

The poetry of the Chinese is constructed on the principle of rhyme like that of modern Europe. It is generally written in stanzas of four verses, three of which must rhyme together. The verses consist sometimes of five and sometimes of seven syllables, that is, words; and the arrangement of them is subject to certain rules having reference to the intonations with which they are pronounced. This system must be nearly similar to ours; as accents and intonations are in substance the same thing. In the present state of our knowledge upon the subject, we have not, however, the means of instituting an

probably contains an allusion, which we do not feel. It is not unlikely, however that it should be understood metaphorically, *bottom* being used for *cause*, and *step* or *degree* for *dignity*, as with us. It might then be translated by *fountain of honor*, a title commonly applied to the monarchs of Europe.

exact comparison between the modes of versification employed in China and our own. The poems of this nation are in general short, and written in a highly figurative and elliptical style. The following *morceau* is extracted from one of the sacred books. It appears at first reading to be of an amatory cast ; but the critics of China consider it as typical of certain truths in political philosophy, having adopted, as a principle of interpretation, that every part of the sacred writings must contain some allusion to politics, which they esteem as the noblest branch of knowledge, or, in their own phrase, as the *great science*. The poem in question is as follows.

‘The north wind chills the air ; the snow falls in large flakes. Oh that the kind being, who loves me, would put his hand in mine, that we might walk together ! How can he stay away so long ? He ought already to have made haste to visit me.’

The following poem is extracted from a novel, and is perhaps interpreted in an amatory sense ; although it seems to us to contain more philosophy than the other. For a work so short the subject is changed rather more frequently than the rules of European composition would admit.

‘The contents of the six classical books have their origin and foundation in the heart of man. Offensive and sarcastic remarks may be expressed with so much elegance as to become agreeable. The universe is a stage, and the business of the world is nothing but a long comedy. The conduct of human affairs in all ages furnishes in truth a curious spectacle.’

With these extracts we close our remarks upon the book before us. Mr Remusat, as we stated above, expresses a high opinion of the value of the literary treasures contained in the Chinese language. It is not probable, however, that he would expect from this quarter any great accession to our stock of knowledge in any of the branches of positive science, or even any models in literature and the arts superior to those we already possess. However little we may really know of the state of learning of the Chinese, it appears certain that they have no pretensions in this respect to an equality with the European world. Mr Remusat must therefore be understood to mean that great advantages of some other kind will result to the cause of science and letters from a diligent cultivation

of Chinese literature ; and in this sense the remark is undoubtedly true.

For in fact it is in this way and in this only that we can attain to a complete acquaintance with the history of this vast empire in all its branches ; and when we consider that about half of the inhabitants of the globe, during the period of which we have any historical accounts, have been Chinese, this object must appear of great importance to the philosophical student. In the nations that occupy the most eastern part of the ancient continent, of which China is the principal, we have a second civilized world, much more ancient and populous, in some respects probably happier and wiser, although at the present moment less advanced in art and science, than the one with which we are acquainted ; and varying from the latter in greater or less degrees in almost every important particular. The civilization of all the countries west of China, including India, Persia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and modern Europe, may be traced without difficulty to a common origin. That of the Chinese, if, as is not impossible, it sprang at first from the same stock, was so early separated from it, that it took an entirely different direction, and has always formed an independent system. Thus the cultivated moral world divides itself into two great sections. The student of man who has directed his attention to only one of them has examined but half his subject ; and has no means of comparing the two parts together, although such a comparison is probably the surest test of truth, to which we can bring the conclusions in regard to either that may be drawn from direct study. Considered in this point of view, the importance of Chinese literature, however highly it may be estimated, can hardly be overvalued.

We shall not, however, be understood to mean that every inquirer after moral and political truth is bound to become a student of the Chinese language. It is only necessary that this language should be considered as one of the branches of liberal knowledge ; and should be cultivated by such persons as feel a particular vocation for it. The fruits of their researches would of course be communicated to the world in the dialects that are known to every accomplished scholar ; and would thus afford to all the opportunity of making observations and drawing conclusions according to the measure of

their talents. Notwithstanding the experiments of the late Judge Winthrop of Cambridge toward simplifying the printing of the Chinese character, our country does not at present afford the materials for prosecuting this study ; but there is no part of the European world, with the exception of England, and perhaps of Russia, where it would be so easy to supply this deficiency ; since there are no others which carry on so extensive a commerce with China as this city and its immediate vicinity.

ART. II.—*Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man, delivered at the Royal College of Surgeons, by William Lawrence, F. R. S. Professor of Anatomy and Surgery to the College, Assistant Surgeon to St Bartholomew's hospital, Surgeon to Bridewell and Bethlehem hospitals, and to the London Infirmary for diseases of the Eye ; with twelve engravings. London, 1822.*

THIS work has excited more general attention, than is usually enjoyed by treatises on similar subjects ; partly on account of the opposition, with which the author's attempt to publish it was encountered and which seems therefore to have been ill-judged, and partly from a certain cast of radical or levelling principles, with which it is tingured.

The first part of it is occupied by four lectures, one of which contains a reply to the charge brought against the author by a brother lecturer, Mr Abernethy, of having 'perverted his office to the very unworthy design of propagating opinions detrimental to society, and of endeavoring to enforce them for the purpose of loosening those restraints, on which the welfare of mankind depends,' and a defence of certain opinions advanced in former lectures. The other three consist of general views of the nature, utility, and proper objects of physiology and zoology. The remaining and by much the largest portion of the work is devoted to the natural history of man. It affords a good view of what has hitherto been done in relation to this very interesting subject, together with the author's particular opinions concerning it.

We think this latter part, with some exceptions, will be found both agreeable and useful to the general reader ; but as